

excluded questions, on which his opinion would have been read with interest.

He discusses some psychological problems, as well as the contact between psychical research and religion, the difference between the intuitional and scientific methods of seeking truth, the nature of the after life and the scheme of evolution, without throwing new light on these subjects. In the last chapter, "Final Conclusions," he has recourse to the writings of Hebrew prophets, Omar Khayyam and Browning for his ideas and illustrations. He has reached what he calls a mild orthodoxy, a belief in a spiritual evolution in a friendly universe with dim consciousness of an all-pervading God. It is an interesting and suggestive work written in a pleasant and easy style.

A. W. TRETHEWY.

III. *A Magician Among the Spirits*. By HOUDINI [*pseud. i.e.* Weiss, Harry]. (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1924, pp. xix. 294. \$4 net.)

I THINK it was Johnson who pointed out the fact that knowledge is of two kinds : we know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it. Though Houdini's knowledge of psychical research may be most profound, he has successfully hidden this fact from the reader of *A Magician Among the Spirits*. And the historian of the future who has to refer to the "impartial results of many years of careful study" (see advertisement), will deserve all the pity he gets.

When I opened the volume and found two pages of "errata and addendum" I feared the worst. Another two pages could easily be compiled. What are we to think of the claim (*vide* jacket) that the book "forms a valuable chapter in the crusade for truth," when we are told that Crawford's book was "published by David Gow" (p. 177), and that the "Crewe Photographers" consist of "Mr. Hope, Mrs. Buxton, Mrs. Deane, and Mr. Vearnacombe" [*sic*] (p. 123) ?

Houdini tells us on page 63 that Mr. Dingwall had caught Eusapia Palladino cheating and "stated positively" that he knew her to be a fraud. For the sake of posterity we will inform Houdini that Mr. Dingwall never saw Eusapia in his life, and that he is not at all certain that she was always fraudulent. On page 128 we are told that Mr. Harry Price had a sitting with Mrs. Deane, whereas the fact is that Mr. Price has never had a sitting with

this particular photographic medium. These are only a few of the silly mis-statements in Houdini's "crusade for truth," and none of those mentioned has been corrected in the list of errata. We are almost tempted to say with Macbeth: "And be these juggling fiends no more believed"!

There is an interesting chapter on Slade, and an alleged confession extracted from the slate-writing medium by a namesake of Houdini's—Remigius Weiss. The "confession" is printed on page 99, but why this most important document has not been reproduced in facsimile is a mystery not elucidated by the author. As there are no fewer than six portraits of Houdini scattered throughout the pages, it is to be regretted that photography was not brought in as a witness to this very strange "confession."

Houdini records (p. 20), another confession by Ira, the survivor of the two Davenport brothers, that their "phenomena" were produced "by perfectly natural means."

Houdini gravely warns us (p. 189) that "not the least of the evils of Spiritualism is the insanity which it causes," and informs us that an "English doctor," wisely unnamed, "has estimated the number of such cases at a million." I am afraid that the perusal of Houdini's book will not effect any cures.

Students of the "nu speling" will find many choice examples in *A Magician Among the Spirits*. We read of Eva C. and the Villa "Carmine"; Mlle. "Tomchick"; Mr. "Baggley," etc., etc. The author informs us in his *Introduction* that he doubts "if any one in the world has so complete a library on modern Spiritualism" as Houdini. What a pity he did not make use of it!